

Top Secret



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CAMBODIA: [Acting Prime Minister Matak is leaving the day-to-day conduct of the war to his generals.]

[Matak]
[] meets daily with the senior Cambodian Army (FANK) generals to discuss problems they believe require his attention and to give his decisions on them when necessary.

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[] Matak's deference toward the military establishment undoubtedly stems from political as well as practical considerations. By allowing the generals a long leash, he can expect to obtain their backing, which will make his over-all task of running the country temporarily much smoother.]

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[The Cambodian leader [] is aware that his inclination to let the generals run their own affairs may make it difficult for Lon Nol to reimpose his highly personal direction of the military when he returns to Phnom Penh. In addition to Matak's mild disapproval of Lon Nol's style in dealing with military affairs, he evidently differs with the prime minister over the size of the armed forces. []

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[] he wants to retain a force level of 220,000 men and [] considers Lon Nol's goal of 300,000 troops to be unrealistic.]

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[On the subject of allied support for the war effort, Matak [] is thinking of asking Seoul to send South Korean troops to Cambodia in order to reduce or even eliminate the country's unwelcome dependency on South Vietnamese forces. If he does request such aid, however, the prospects are that he will not secure it. Earlier Korean enthusiasm for military involvement in Cambodia dampened when the US indicated that it would not provide financial and materiel support for such a move. Moreover, the atmosphere in Seoul does not now favor expanded military involvement in Southeast Asia.

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NOTES

USSR-CUBA: [The Soviet Kresta-class guided-missile cruiser and the tanker Liepaya entered Cienfuegos yesterday. The cruiser had been operating in the Gulf of Mexico since leaving Havana on 15 February. U-2 photography [redacted] shows the Soviet submarine tender and the N-class nuclear-powered attack submarine still moored in the naval basin near Cayo Alcatraz in Cienfuegos Bay. Crews from the Soviet ships were seen using the recreation facilities on the island. The two nuclear submarine support barges are still tied up at the Cuban naval base.] [redacted]

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CUBA-BELGIUM: Negotiations described by Belgian officials as "very well advanced" are taking place between Cuba and a Belgian consortium for a \$40-million sugar refinery that would be the largest in the world. Such an installation would add significantly to Cuba's refining capacity, which currently enables Havana to refine about one million tons of raw sugar annually. Brussels' investment credit organization is prepared to extend a credit of unspecified amount, and the consortium has asked for a government guarantee. Although economic and political pressures in Belgium to conclude the deal are substantial, Foreign Minister Harmel has requested that his colleagues give him two weeks to consider the foreign-policy implications of such an arrangement.

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